

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 MCT-01 HA-02 PA-01 SPTA-01  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L PANAMA 06281

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINS, PINT, PINR, NU  
SUBJECT: INTERVIEW WITH SANDINISTAS

SUMMARY: SANDINISTA LEADERS TOLD A U.S. JOURNALIST  
THAT ALL OF THE SANDINISTAS WHO ARRIVED FROM NICARAGUA  
LAST WEEK ARE STILL IN PANAMA. THE JOURNALIST  
BELIEVES THAT THEY WILL REMAIN HERE FOR AT LEAST  
ANOTHER WEEK OR SO. HE SAID THAT THERE APPEARS TO BE  
A SPLIT AMONG THE SANDINISTAS HERE, BASED PRIMARILY  
ON GREATER OR LESSER INTRANSIGENCE AND ADHERENCE TO  
STRICT MARXISM. END SUMMARY.

1. AMERICAN JOURNALIST TAD SZULC ON AUGUST 29 SPOKE FOR  
THREE AND ONE HALF HOURS WITH SANDINISTA LEADERS  
EDEN PASTORA (COMANDANTE ZERO), HUGO TORRES (COMANDANTE  
UNO), DORA MARIE TELLEZ (COMANDANTE DOS), AND TOMAS  
BORGE, SZULC SAID THAT PRESS ACCESS TO THE SANDINISTAS  
IS VERY RESTRICTED. THE SANDINISTAS TOLD HIM THAT ONLY  
SZULC, GRAHAM GREENE AND GABRIEL GARCIA MARQUES HAD  
SPOKEN WITH THEM. SZULC SAID THE SUBSTANCE OF HIS  
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INTERVIEW WITH THE SANDINISTAS WILL APPEAR IN SUNDAY'S  
WASHINGTON POST.

2. SZULC SAID THAT -- EXCEPT FOR ZERO, WHO VISITED  
VENEZUELA -- NONE OF THE SANDINISTAS HAVE LEFT PANAMA.  
ALL ARE AT THE NATIONAL GUARD'S TINAJITAS GARRISON  
OUTSIDE PANAMA CITY, WHERE THEY APPEAR TO BE FREE TO

ROAM AROUND THE COMPOUND. SZULC SAID LT. COL. MANUEL ANTONIO NORIEGA, NATIONAL GUARD G-2 ASSURED HIM THERE WOULD BE NO PRESS CONFERENCE IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS (KEEPING HIS SUNDAY STORY FRESH). HE ALSO REPORTED NORIEGA AS HAVING SAID THAT THE SANDINISTAS HAVE BEEN GRANTED "DE FACTO" ASYLUM, BUT THEY WOULD BE KEPT AT TINAJITAS UNTIL THEIR PAPERS ARE IN ORDER. SZULC GOT THE DEFINITE IMPRESSION BOTH FROM NORIEGA AND FROM THE SANDINISTAS THAT THERE IS NO HURRY ON THE PART OF EITHER FOR THEM TO LEAVE TINAJITAS. HE SAID THE SANDINISTAS BELIEVE THAT SOMOZA IS ABOUT TO FALL, AND THEY SEEMED SATISFIED WITH THE PROSPECT OF STAYING IN PANAMA -- AND SPECIFICALLY IN TINAJITAS FOR AT LEAST THE NEXT WEEK OR SO. SZULC SAID THE SANDINISTAS APPEAR TO HAVE NO IMMEDIATE PLANS, BUT RATHER ARE "PLAYING IT BY EAR" FOR NOW. THERE HAVE BEEN PERSISTENT REPORTS IN PANAMA THAT THE SANDINISTAS WOULD LEAVE SOON FOR CUBA OR COSTA RICA. IN FACT, THERE ARE RUMORS THAT THEY HAVE ALREADY DONE SO. BUT THE SANDINISTAS TOLD SZULC THAT THIS IS NOT TRUE. HE SAID THEY PARTICULARLY HAVE NO REASON FOR GOING TO CUBA SINCE THEY THINK THE END IS SO NEAR FOR SOMOZA.

3. SZULC WAS IMPRESSED BY THE SANDINISTAS' APPARENT INTELLIGENCE, EARNESTNESS AND POTENTIAL FOR SUCCESS. HE WAS PARTICULARLY IMPRESSED WITH BORGE, WHOM HE CONFIDENTIAL

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DESCRIBED AS A MILITANT IDEOLOGICAL MARXIST. HE SAID BORGE SEEMED TO HAVE A CLEARER IDEA OF WHERE HE WAS GOING AND HOW TO GET THERE THAN EITHER ZERO OR UNO. HE SAID NO. DOS STRUCK HIM AS BEING A CAPABLE AND CONVINCED MARXIST REVOLUTIONARY. BEFORE THE INTERVIEW SZULC WAS TOLD BY WELL-INFORMED LEFTISTS IN PANAMA THAT THERE WAS A DISTINCT SPLIT BETWEEN THE RESCUERS (LED BY ZERO AND UNO) AND THE RESCUED (LED BY BORGE). THE BORGE GROUP IS ALLEGEDLY INTRANSIGENT IN ITS DETERMINATION TO SEIZE POWER IN NICARAGUA WITHOUT BOURGEOIS HELP, WHEREAS ZERO AND UNO ARE MORE INCLINED TO FLEXIBILITY IN TACTICS. SZULC SAID HE MIGHT NOT HAVE NOTICED THIS DIFFERENCE HAD HE NOT BEEN INFORMED BEFOREHAND, BUT IT CAME THROUGH RATHER CLEARLY SINCE HE KNEW ABOUT IT. SZULC SAID BORGE LEFT THE ROOM FOR ABOUT FIFTEEN MINUTES DURING THE INTERVIEW, AND THE DIFFERENCE OF APPROACH BECAME OBVIOUS WHEN THE OTHERS WERE LEFT ALONE. SZULC SAID THAT HE HAD ASKED ONLY TO SEE THE NUMBERED LEADERS. HE THOUGHT IT SIGNIFICANT THAT THE SANDINISTAS INSISTED THAT BORGE (WHOM HE HAD NOT HEARD OF) ALSO ATTEND THE INTERVIEW AND THAT, FOR THE MOST PART, BORGE LED THE CONVERSATION

FROM THE SANDINISTAS' STANDPOINT. DIKEOS

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## Message Attributes

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